The Seven Dollar Bill"

SECOND COPY.

The Black Cat

TWO COPIES RECEIVED.

June 1900

Dr. Gilbert's Seven-Dollar Bill.
Frank Lillie Pollock and J. D. Ellsworth.

The Passing of Brickville.
Joseph N. Quail.

An Unfair Exchange.
Ethel Watts Mumford.

The Man Who Could Walk Straight.
Frank Burnham Bagley.

In Hell's Cañon.
Harold Kinsabby.

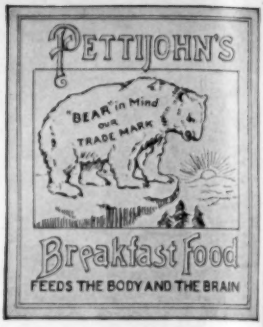
5 CENTS

No. 57. Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Co.

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO 144 HIGH ST BOSTON MASS.

5 Complete Stories 5

MOTHER GOOSE IN PROSE FREE



Pettijohn's Breakfast Food

ALL THE WHEAT BUT THE OVERCOAT

FREE **MOTHER GOOSE IN PROSE.** **FREE**

By L. FRANK BAUM.

Beautifully printed and illustrated. In 12 parts.

"Better entertainment than the jingles on which it is founded."—*Boston Transcript.*

"A world of entertainment for the little ones."—*Chicago Evening Post.*

"Will surely keep the children happy."—*St. Louis Post Dispatch.*

Send three Bears cut from Pettijohn's Breakfast Food package and 8 cents in stamps to pay for mailing and we will send you **FREE** a copy of the first part of **Mother Goose in Prose.**

THE AMERICAN CEREAL CO., Monadnock Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

Avoid mushy, starchy, pasty breakfast cereals by eating Pettijohn's Breakfast Food. Each flake of Pettijohn's Breakfast Food is a thin, delicate wafer containing all of the nutrition of one large plump kernel of choicest Pacific Coast wheat. Unlike granulated cereals it may be properly cooked without becoming a starchy, unpalatable mush.

The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

No. 57. JUNE, 1900. 5 cents a copy. 50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories — every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION. — *The entire contents of* THE BLACK CAT *are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

Dr. Gilbert's Seven-Dollar Bill.*

BY FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK AND J. D. ELLSWORTH.

IT was a wet afternoon, and Mr. Francis Howland was walking, not on the slimy sidewalk, but on the rather more slimy pavement of the street. His umbrella was neatly folded and tucked under his left arm, and in the hollow of this arm nestled a brown-paper parcel which he carefully kept in place with his right hand. The moisture had settled upon his glasses, causing him to step into puddles frequently, his hat was rapidly becoming saturated, and, as the sidewalks were packed with the usual rainy-day crowds, he was the object of much curiosity and even some ridicule.

His conduct was due, however, not to absent-mindedness, although Mr. Howland was a very absent-minded man. But he was a collector of rare china, and the delicate bit in the brown-paper parcel, though bought at auction, was too precious to be sent home by messenger or express. That was why he dared not trust even himself to the jostling crowd upon the sidewalk, and was hurrying toward the nearest cab-stand. When a cab was found he settled back on its cushions with a sigh of relief. At

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

his own door he drew from his trousers pocket a roll of bills, handed the outside "two" to the driver, and waited impatiently for the change.

"Can't break that," said the cabby, and Mr. Howland, much annoyed, fumbled in his waistcoat pocket for the amount in silver.

When the china collector left his home next morning, his first stop was at the corner drug-store, where he made a small purchase and again offered the outside bill of his roll. The clerk was about to make change, but after his first glance at the note he scrutinized it carefully and handed it back with the remark: "Sorry I can't change that;" adding, half apologetically, "never saw a seven-dollar bill before."

Although Mr. Howland had failed to examine the bill, he supposed it to be an ordinary two-dollar greenback, and he remembered positively having received it in change at the auction-room as a two. But now that he looked at it again, it proved to be a seven. He had never given much attention to money as money, though he possessed a good deal of it, and while he had never before seen a seven-dollar bill, he was far from affirming that such a thing did not exist. In fact, it *did* exist, since he had it. Therefore, being thrifty in small matters, he congratulated himself upon being five dollars ahead. Thanking the drug-clerk, he handed out another bill, and with a fortunate lapse into memory recalled his errand at the florist's. The violets were very fragrant that morning, and when he had selected a suitable bunch and produced his card to be sent with them, he proffered the seven-dollar bill in payment.

"I'll have to let that go till next time, Mr. Howland," said the florist after curiously examining the bill. Then he added in explanation, "I haven't the change this morning."

Though Howland was only a moderate smoker, he was impelled to enter a tobacconist's that particular morning and purchase a few cigars, without, however, getting rid of his seven-dollar bill. At the restaurant where he lunched at noon he again offered it, but was told by his favorite waiter that the fussy cashier refused to take it. That same afternoon it seemed convenient to replenish his stock of stationery. When the seven-dollar bill was tendered

in payment the dealer asked: "Haven't you the change, sir? I'm loaded up with large bills."

Now, Mr. Howland knew that he might insist on paying for his purchase as he chose, but he began to feel that he was handicapped by a certain ignorance on the subject of current issues — especially seven-dollar bills — which his vanity forbade him disclose. But he was all the more determined to pass that bill for its full face value, and next day he started out with that determination, instinctively avoiding the places where he was known. He found himself calling for all sorts of articles for which he had no use, but every time he handed out the troublesome bill it was politely refused with some familiar pretext. Finally it occurred to him to go to his friend Hall, the hatter. A silk hat would cost just seven dollars, and there would be no question of change involved. But one glance was enough for Hall, who exclaimed, "Why, Howland, that thing's no earthly good — you've been taken in!" This came as an embarrassing shock to the collector, who now remembered that the florist who pleaded a lack of change had plenty in his drawer and that others had offered equally poor excuses for not accepting the peculiar bill, which he now put away carefully in an inner pocket.

That night, in his own rooms, Howland got out a magnifying glass which he used for deciphering difficult marks on his china. Then he drew down the window-shades and took out the seven-dollar bill. Under the glass, while continuing to resemble in a general way a two-dollar silver certificate, the note showed some remarkable discrepancies. It had lost its crackle, but did not display signs of much handling, and the signatures were perfectly distinct. They were not different, but the same repeated — "W. P. Kendall," — and beneath it the single word, "Treasurer." On the face was a tropical landscape, with a building in the foreground, the whole surrounded by a wreath of palms. There were two portraits on the back, beautifully executed. One was that of a middle-aged, full-bearded man, and might represent any one of half a dozen past secretaries of the Treasury and still be unknown to Mr. Howland. The other face, equally strange to him, was the most striking he had ever seen. It was clean-shaven, handsome and full of character — one that could not be forgotten.

The fact that neither face was familiar to him did not surprise Howland. Few men can name half the portraits that have appeared on the national currency. But the china collector noticed that all the "sevens" on the bill, and they were numerous, were almost equally perfect "twos" when reversed, and that a monogram which appeared in several places, and which he had assumed to be "U. S." proved on closer examination to be "N. G." In fact, the whole lettering and numbering of the queer note was a jumble that meant nothing to him. He would have taken it to his banker for an explanation, but felt too much humiliated to acknowledge there that he had accepted worthless money. He therefore placed it with a sigh in a cabinet of coins, and cast up an account which showed that, instead of being five dollars ahead, he had spent nearly four times that amount in trying to pass the thing.

While Mr. Howland made china his hobby, he was interested in all sorts of valuable curios, and several weeks after the incident of the seven-dollar bill he found in a Japanese store, where he had gone to look at some lacquer work, an ornament of the rarest sort. It was one of the picturesque lotus-flower lanterns of antique green bronze, the fretwork openings of which were lined with transparent red tissue in order to produce the peculiar Oriental sunset effect. The rarity and value of such a lantern is known to collectors, and Howland desired to buy it, provided it could be hung with effect in the entrance hall of his bachelor quarters. The dealer was very willing to show how it would look, and so an appointment was made for the next evening. After the lotus lantern had been suspended by a black iron chain, the polite Oriental expressed such interest in the treasures of the apartment that the owner took pride in displaying them. The dealer, in passing to some rare Koro jars, glanced perfunctorily at the coin cabinet, and a startled look flashed across his sallow face.

Controlling himself, he inquired carelessly what value Mr. Howland placed upon that strange seven-dollar bill. Being told that it was valuable only as a curiosity, the Japanese, with a deferential air, offered to take it at twice its face value. Now, the collector, whose sole interest in the bill hitherto had been to get rid of it for seven dollars, had his conception of its value vastly

increased upon being offered fourteen, and with that strange perversity of human nature which curio collectors largely share, refused to name a price, saying that his collection could not spare this rare and unique specimen.

It was at about this time that Mr. Howland received from his friend, Mr. Langley Stafford, of the Treasury Department at Washington, an invitation to visit the national capital to avail himself of the opportunity of a collector's lifetime. A foreign ambassador, having made himself obnoxious to this Government, had been recalled by his own, and all collectors will remember the excitement when it was announced that his art treasures would be offered at public sale. Buyers were gathering from all over the country, and Mr. Howland was delighted at the prospect. Before departing, and while packing some small, but particularly valuable articles for consignment to the safe-deposit vaults, he caught sight of the seven-dollar bill, and thinking that his Treasury friend would be just the person to throw light on its history, he placed it carefully in his pocket.

The auction took place in the handsome house lately occupied by the Embassy, and as Howland idled in the crowded rooms, waiting for the sale of the articles of especial interest to himself, he noticed, standing by a window, a man whose face seemed familiar. His attention was withdrawn for a while, and then his eyes wandered back to the stranger, a man of about forty, clean-shaven, handsome and fashionably dressed. Howland felt certain that he had somewhere seen that strong, intellectual countenance, and as he puzzled over it the recollection flashed upon him. Cautiously taking from his pocket the seven-dollar bill he hurriedly examined it. One of the portraits upon its back was realized before him in the flesh! There could be no doubt about it. Beckoning to Stafford, Howland pointed out to him the smooth-faced man by the window, and then, pushing his friend into a curtained alcove, exhibited the bill.

Stafford was at once interested in the unmistakable identity of the portrait, but more excited at the bill itself, which he assured Howland was a very dangerous thing to have in his possession. He said it was undoubtedly his duty to telephone to the Secret Service Bureau for a detective, and asked Howland, meanwhile, to

keep the stranger in sight. The timid china collector did not exactly relish being utilized as a Government spy. The man's face had made a rather favorable impression upon him and he half hoped that its owner would slip quietly away before the officials arrived. But Stafford was back in a few minutes and soon after was joined by the detective. At the invitation of the latter, the man by the window unhesitatingly joined the two in the alcove, and with the same equanimity consented to accompany them, hoping he would not be detained long from the sale, but expressing a perfect willingness to be of any service to the Government.

The quartet entered a carriage and were driven to the Treasury Building, where they were soon in the private office of the Chief of the Secret Service Division. He was not at his desk, but the official in charge heard the story and examined the seven-dollar bill with much interest. He then suggested to the stranger that a full explanation might save much future trouble.

The suspected gentleman took the bill with some surprise, but with the same unruffled coolness. But as he scrutinized it his manner suffered a striking and unfavorable change. His face paled as he gazed intently at the note, which shook in his hands. For many minutes he turned it over and over, saying nothing, and apparently examining every portion minutely. It seemed as though he were trying to gain time and invent an explanation, and the officials exchanged significant glances. Even Howland felt his faith in the handsome stranger waver.

Presently the man emerged from his absorption, seemed to make an effort to collect himself, and then, facing the Government men, said calmly:

"You ask me for an explanation. I think an explanation is due me. I am Dr. Gilbert. Will you kindly tell me the reason for my arrest? I suppose it amounts to that."

"Not an arrest, exactly, but this counterfeit bears your portrait. An explanation from you is naturally expected."

"As for this peculiar bill," said the stranger deliberately, as he laid it down, "I never saw it before, nor anything at all like it. You say it is a counterfeit. A counterfeit bill, I believe, is an unauthorized imitation of the Government currency. No seven-dollar bill has ever been issued — to my knowledge — and therefore,

in this case, there was nothing to counterfeit. You cannot suppose any one insane enough to manufacture such a thing as this with any expectation of profit? In fact, if I may venture to express an opinion, this is not an engraved or printed bill at all, but an original drawing, done entirely by hand. Moreover, there has been no attempt to imitate the essential features of a United States note. Neither the portraits nor the landscape are such as appear on any of our Government bills. More important than all, there are neither the words 'United States' nor 'dollars,' nor even the dollar sign anywhere to be seen.

"As for my portrait, I do not deny that the likeness is perfect. What of that? Pictures of General Grant and other distinguished persons have appeared on counterfeit greenbacks without suspicion of complicity. If I had had anything to do with this bill, do you suppose I would have trade-marked it with my face? And even if I had done these two incredible things, do you imagine I would have come here to Washington voluntarily to parade that face in the very headquarters of the Secret Service?"

The officials were dumfounded, for the stranger had made it very evident that a blunder had been committed which might react upon them with disastrous effect, if he had influence and chose to exert it. Before a suitable answer could be framed, the door swung open, the Chief of the Secret Service entered, and catching sight of the commanding figure of the stranger, advanced with extended hand, exclaiming:

"Ah, Doctor! Glad to see you. What can we do for you to-day?"

Responding cordially to the greeting, the Doctor replied:

"Why, your people here seem to think I can help them in a rather strange matter," and he pointed to the seven-dollar bill.

A short whispered conversation between the Chief and his subordinate was abruptly terminated by the former, who said to Dr. Gilbert, in a manner which in itself was a rebuke to the others:

"Well, Doctor, if we should chance to need your help in this matter, I know where to find you. Thank you very much for your goodness in coming now."

When the Doctor had nonchalantly left the office, Mr. Howland,

whose interest in the seven-dollar bill was now greater than ever, asserted his ownership and asked that the curio, since it was no counterfeit, be restored to him. This the officials immediately refused, calling attention to the law which required them to seize everything in any way resembling United States coin or notes, whether or not intended to deceive, and emphasizing the point that it really had deceived so intelligent a person as himself.

Rather resentful at what he considered the brusque behavior of the Secret Service men, and telling Stafford he would meet him later at the sale, Howland left the Treasury Building in an unpleasant frame of mind. As he descended the outer steps he met the Doctor, strolling up and down, and making notes on the back of an envelope. Evidently he was in no guilty haste to leave the locality. Howland, rather dreading the ordeal, hastened to apologize for having been the cause of so unpleasant an incident. He was therefore agreeably surprised when the Doctor, refusing to listen to any apologies, protested that he regarded their meeting as a most fortunate one. In fact, he was so cordial that the collector accepted an invitation to lunch with him on the following day. Not, however, until they exchanged cards did the Doctor say:

"I am convinced that there may be a fortune for both of us in this strange affair, but to satisfy you that it will be a legitimate one I want you first to know more about me. Enquire at any of these places," he went on, jotting down addresses on the back of his card. They included a couple of banks, the Smithsonian Institution and several men of national reputation resident in Washington. "If you are perfectly satisfied, meet me at the Arlington at one o'clock, but don't mention the seven-dollar bill till then. By the way, they kept it, I suppose? I thought so. Well, we will meet to-morrow."

Howland rejoined the Doctor at the appointed time, and his pleasure and appreciation increased during the progress of the luncheon. A man of the world, evidently a wide traveller, a brilliant and picturesque talker, Dr. Gilbert was one of the most fascinating men the collector had ever met. Nothing was said about the seven-dollar bill till they reached the coffee and cigars. Then, at the request of his host, Mr. Howland began telling his

experiences with it. The Doctor listened, and suddenly interrupting, said:

"I noticed that it had been handled but little, and wondered where and how you got it."

Howland, continuing, related the incident of the Japanese dealer's eager desire to purchase the bill, when the Doctor, with the first show of real enthusiasm he had manifested, exclaimed, "Good! Now we are on the right track. That bill had a meaning which no one on earth but myself could read, but the message was incomplete. The curio dealer can supply the missing link. You noticed that I studied it as long as I could, and afterwards made note of my observations. Now, if you are willing to trust me, we will make this investigation together, and begin by looking up your Japanese friend."

The two men left Washington on an evening train and called next day at the quaint little store where Howland had found his lotus lantern. A clerk was in attendance, and his explanations in broken English were a severe disappointment to both Howland and his friend. The proprietor was gone — far away — back to Japan. He went quick when the letter came saying his father was dying. That was all the clerk knew.

The sign over the door read, "T. Kiyomora & Co., Dealers in Japanese Goods." This seemed to puzzle the Doctor when the clerk said it was Kiyomora who had gone to Japan, and there was no one else — only Kiyomora. But when they left he explained to Howland that the Japanese they wanted was probably not Kiyomora, but another, who took the firm name with the business. Now there was nothing to be done but await his return, whoever he was, and Howland promised to keep watch and telegraph at once.

It was not until the Doctor had left the city that the sedate china collector realized how completely he was still baffled by the mystery of the seven-dollar bill. He could not doubt that Dr. Gilbert had good reasons for his reticence in regard to it, and it was some satisfaction that so eminent a man had asked his aid in tracing its history. But Howland now could not keep his mind off the puzzle. He began to make nervous enquiries at the curio shop long before it was possible for any news to have come.

In fact, it was three months before the clerk heard from Japan, and six weeks after that when, seeing the dealer's familiar face in the window, Howland telegraphed for the Doctor. The next day he met him at the station and together they drove to the shop of T. Kiyomora & Co. Howland would not have been surprised at another disappointment, but the dealer was there when they entered, and, staring with amazement at the Doctor, called him by name. After a few words, the Doctor, apologizing to Howland, followed the proprietor into a little private room, where they remained for half an hour.

Meanwhile, the china collector sought to occupy himself with some rare pieces of bric-à-brac, such as would usually have been an absorbing study, but his interest in ceramics seemed to have gone. He was hoping for a speedy solution of the mystery surrounding their quest, but when the Doctor joined him outside it was merely to say that the foreigner's name was, as he had surmised, Sanetomo, but that they would have to go to Mexico for the unravelling of the meaning of the seven-dollar bill. He urged Howland to accompany him as his guest, and assured him that besides being in itself well worth the time, it might turn out to be the most profitable trip he had ever made.

Howland, possessing all the dogged persistence of the collector, having entered upon the undertaking needed little urging to continue, especially with so genial a companion, and repressing his curiosity prepared for the journey. On the way South Dr. Gilbert talked of everything but the seven-dollar bill, and even stopped over a day in New Orleans to go with his guest in search of some old French china. Afterwards the journey was continued over the Texan plains. They left the railroad near the Mexican border and took to the stage. When the stage, at last, went no farther, it seemed to Howland that he knew why the East was sometimes called "God's country."

Though they were nearing the end, there was yet ahead of them a rough country, wild and lawless, where many a man had been shot for his horse and rifle. It was a trying situation for the poor curio collector, who never before had travelled other than first-class. He watched the buying of burros and the throwing of the diamond hitch, and finally suffered himself to be led up a thread-

like trail into the mountains, with nothing to sustain him but his confidence in his friend. He needed sustaining in the next two days, in spite of the scenic magnificence everywhere.

But the hard road came to an end at the verge of a little cup-shaped valley that he dimly seemed to recognize. In the centre was the white gleam of buildings among the trees. The Doctor was visibly agitated, and Howland exclaimed:

"The scene on the seven-dollar bill!"

They found the house deserted and its approaches choked with rank tropical growths. The Doctor did not seek to enter, but turning at an abrupt angle, pushed his way through the jungle toward rising ground to the left. Here he paused, standing in his stirrups, and looking eagerly about. Finally, with an exclamation of satisfaction, he led the way towards a huge block of white stone, glinting through the shrubbery at some distance. There he dismounted, removed his hat, and stood for a few moments in reverential silence, Howland almost unconsciously imitating him, while a dozen wild conjectures whirled through his brain.

"Under that block," said the Doctor at last, "lies the best friend of my life, and here, I think, we shall find what we seek. I owe you a full explanation in return for the confidence that has made you follow me blindly to this lonely tomb. I was uncertain on some points, but now things seem clearer. Tell me, did you ever hear of David C. Osborne, who was once known as "The Emperor"?

"The name sounds familiar," said Howland, thinking hard.

"Naturally, for at one time the newspapers were filled with the mystery of his disappearance. His real name was William P. Kendall, and one of the portraits on the seven-dollar bill was his own. The Secret Service men did not recognize the picture, because he had grown a beard since they knew him. Fifteen years ago Kendall was a counterfeiter, and the detectives called him Emperor, because in every respect he stood pre-eminent above his craft. He was a thorough chemist and manufactured his own fibre paper, upon which he printed from plates of his own engraving notes and bonds that positively could not be told from the genuine, except from the unavoidable duplication of numbering. Some of his notes, I have no doubt, are still in circulation.

"But more remarkable than his peculiar skill was the fact that in all respects apart from this one manifestation of moral obliquity he was a marvel of rectitude — a gentleman in every meaning of the term. His mere word was more to be relied upon than the sworn signatures of many men, and his talent was by no means confined to his imitative ability. He had a singularly original and resourceful mind, and, in fact, was a man of enormous possibilities, gone wrong. An unfortunate love affair in early life in which he suffered unjustly for another's fault warped his ethical perceptions. It certainly gave him a severe shock and deprived him of a definite aim in life. Such a man is as dangerous as he is able, and none but the United States officers can understand how and why he stood so high with those whose duty made him a foe to be untiringly pursued. Twice they let him go on his bare word that he would deliver up his plates and paper, and each time he gave up every scrap — and went off to begin anew. When the Government officers next got him, his largest and finest issue was just ready for circulation. If it could be stopped it would save the detectives an immense amount of work. They knew that the Emperor's word was to be relied upon, and this time they gave him his choice between prison for life and a square promise to give up forever his secrets, his business and his country. He made that promise and kept it. He grew a beard, resumed his own name and dropped out of sight.

"This was his self-chosen St. Helena, knowing that it would be only by avoiding civilization entirely that he could resist the exercise of his peculiar imitative talents. I had at that time been practising as a specialist in my profession, and was travelling for rest in this out-of-the-way region, when after an accidental meeting I was able to pull him through a bad attack of fever. At his urgent solicitation, I remained with him during his long convalescence, and then awhile longer as his guest, until, yielding to the charm of this locality and to the magnetism of a man I have never seen equalled, I remained indefinitely. He had a Japanese servant, in whom he had great confidence, and there we three dwelt alone in this lovely Mexican valley, miles from anywhere.

"The poor old Emperor was a most restless man, with an energy proof against even this *mañana* climate. He was perpetu-

ally working at something — inventing some queer contrivance — and probably longed for the old exciting life, though he never said so, nor hinted remotely at any desire to do wrong again. After he had been here awhile he devised an improved granolithic pavement, which alone must have brought him a fortune. This tomb is constructed of that material, though I was unaware of its existence until our visit to Sanetomo.

"I used to transact his business with the outside world, and cash his checks, and he always had the money in American gold — double eagles. Even these he felt to be a temptation to his powers of duplication, and he began to turn his gold into gems. I went for him to New York, London and Amsterdam, to buy precious stones of all sorts. He used to say that they were, after all, the only practical form of concentrated wealth, but in them, as in everything else, he demanded perfection. Caring not for size alone, he would accept nothing but the rarest and most valuable specimens, and once he sent me back to exchange ten superb but slightly imperfect stones for a single flawless one. In this way I travelled over Europe and to the Orient at his expense, and on each trip I brought back thousands of dollars' worth of gems.

"This thing went on for ten years, and then I returned from my last trip to be met with a severe and shocking surprise. On landing I went, as usual, directly to the bank, and there I found a heavy package, which proved to be from Sanetomo, containing an announcement of his master's death and burial, and enclosing a sealed envelope in which I found seven Mexican silver dollars and a note from Kendall himself, informing me that he had given his collection of curios and other effects to the faithful Japanese, and left me the enclosure, which would explain itself. The stones I had purchased on that last trip I was to keep.

"I was too much overcome with grief to think very deeply on the matter at the moment. I had been treated very handsomely, and the jewels were worth a large sum. But after awhile I could not help wondering at the disposition of the immense fortune I knew the Emperor must have had, and on the meaning of the seven silver dollars. All my tests revealed good, solid metal — no hollow centres, no secret marks. Too late I instituted enquiries for Sanetomo — he had disappeared with his trinkets.

"When that seven-dollar bill was handed me at Washington, I for the first time began to understand. It was the Emperor's will, the most wonderful will ever drawn. He was never content to do things as others do them. Even the last work of his life had been — not counterfeiting, exactly — but something requiring the same qualifications. The will contained a message to me. The message was, of course, brief, and merely said in the secret cipher we employed in our correspondence, "Break open the block covering my tomb." Now, I did not know where to look for that tomb, and naturally feared that Sanetomo, having gone to the length of abstracting the seven-dollar bill and sending me seven Mexican silver dollars instead, with a message to prevent my return to Mexico, might have gone further, and concealed Kendall's burying place, or even robbed it, if its contents are what I now suspect. So I deferred coming here while any reasonable prospect remained of finding the Japanese.

"When we confronted him the other day upon his return from the Orient, he told me that he had yielded to that curiosity which is a marked peculiarity of his race. For months he had seen his master working, under a powerful magnifying glass, at what seemed to be a piece of money, and the more he saw it — for the Emperor, confident that no one but myself could read the cipher, took no pains to conceal it — the more he longed to know what it meant. So, hoping some time to solve the riddle, he took it cleverly from the sealed envelope, and to soothe his conscience, when he found it represented seven dollars, substituted the silver. He desired it most, he declared, for its faithful pictures of his beloved master and of this locality. That is why he was so anxious to buy it of you. After he left here, and while travelling through the Southwest just before buying the business in your city, he was held up and robbed of what money he had about him, including the seven-dollar bill. It is easy to see how it had a brief career as a 'two' before reaching you. When Sanetomo saw it in your possession, the desire to recover it was strong, as he had always believed it would bring him good fortune."

From the burro that carried their baggage, the Doctor now took a geologist's hammer, with which he struck the exact centre of the square granolithic block. In a few minutes he had chipped

out several inches of a soft core and broken into a hollow, leading, apparently, to the very heart of the cube. A stout lever was then introduced and the two men strained at it vigorously. With a rending crash the block split open and showed that, instead of being solid, it was composed of four sections neatly cemented together, enclosing a large cavity from which there came a yellow gleam that made Howland's heart jump. There lay five golden spheres, apparently exact models of the six-inch bombshells used in the Civil War.

"Who else would have dreamed of such a strange device!" muttered the Doctor, reaching for one of the precious globes. Howland seized another and was astonished at its lightness.

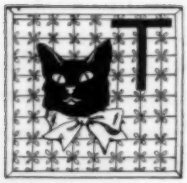
"Why, it's hollow!" he exclaimed, disappointed. But Doctor Gilbert was already unscrewing the cap covering the simulated fuse-plug of his bomb. It was literally a shell, and from it the Doctor poured into his hat a rainbow cataract. The china collector gasped and sat down on the remnants of the shattered block. The golden sphere was half filled with unset diamonds of the finest water.

A hurried examination showed that the other shells contained rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and a mixture of pearls, opals and turquoises, all perfect and of wonderful beauty.

They replaced the fractured block, and when they left, its ruptured top was piled high with crimson flowers, blazing with the tint of the rubies ravished from its core.

The Passing of Brickville.*

BY JOSEPH N. QUAIL.



HE destiny of Brickville was decided when Pikey McGinn's chimney caught fire, and in that flame the Brickvillian hope of a metropolis in the heart of the Bad Lands went up in smoke.

Brickville didn't realize it at the moment, because, paradoxical as it may seem, the little blaze which destroyed the town was easily got under control. The place hadn't progressed as far as a fire department, and it would not have helped matters if it had. A tipsy cowboy who had been sampling Pikey's hardware vaulted to the back of a wolfish-looking cayuse, yelled a few times in hearty Montana fashion, and then swung his riata at the chimney. As the noose fell fair about the stack of bricks he dug spurs into the sides of his mount and made a run upon the rope.

The chimney came down with a crash; the fire was out; the fate of Brickville was written.

That is why the town does not appear upon any map. But if ever you have ridden over the Northern Pacific you can probably recall a long and narrow valley to the north as you passed out of the Bad Lands of Dakota into the Bad Lands of Montana. That is where Brickville stood. The soil all about is hard and dry and red, and there is no verdure. Not anywhere in sight is there a tree. The side hills are seamed with black strata, and the rains have carried stains from these and streaked the valley with them on both sides of the muddy little stream which winds away to the south.

The black strata are seams of bituminous coal, and it was in mining this coal that the Brickvillians made their living. There is still pay in these streaks, but the people who worked them have

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

drifted away, and on the site of the town prairie dogs and coyotes and rattlesnakes hold annual conventions which never adjourn.

If any place ever fully justified its name, that place was Brickville. At the height of its prosperity it had, exclusive of sheds and stables, eighty-seven one-story buildings, including the railroad station, the saloon and the tonsorial parlor, and every one of them was of brick — even the sheds. There were optimists who looked forward to a brick court-house and a brick jail, and but for the fire in Pikey McGinn's chimney these aspirations might have been realized.

Pierre Succotash played perhaps the most prominent part in Brickville's destruction. Pierre was a French-Canadian, whose rear name had come into collision with Brickville's sense of propriety, and some of its letters were dislocated by the shock. He had been gold mining in British Columbia, and no one had inquired very closely into the reason of his coming from a gold to a coal camp; it would have established an uncomfortable precedent. But he went nosing about the wreck of that chimney, as he went nosing into everything that happened in town; and Fred Ritchie, who conducted "the tonsorial parlor," which was across the street from McGinn's, saw him suddenly dart in and pick up a broken brick.

Now Fred and Succotash had said some unpleasant things to each other once upon a time, and Fred, believing that Pierre was courting trouble, promptly ran in for his gun; but when he came out Succotash was nowhere to be seen.

Next morning Pikey found that some one had carried off nearly half of his chimney bricks, and he promptly declared it to be the work of Slanteye McCafferty, his hated rival in the hardware business. Mac denied this in vigorous language, and a gunplay was imminent when the whiskey agent happened along and announced a reduction in rates by the barrel; and then they had a drink, and ordered half a barrel each, and the hatchet was buried.

But the war was on hotter than ever next day, for the remainder of Pikey's loose bricks had disappeared in the night. Pikey swore that Slanteye was planning a cheap extension to his gin mill, and Mac retorted that he would be a fool indeed to go around picking up hoodoos that had fallen from his rival's leaky roof.

Then each got a shotgun and stood out in front of his saloon

waiting for the other to come along. And the result of this was that trade fell off in both places, for Brickvillians knew that shotguns scattered their charges and they refused to slake their thirst when there was a chance that a stray buckshot might next moment spring them aleak. So that it was that business interests induced the rivals for a second time to declare a truce, and then the town breathed easier and drank oftener.

A week later Succotash was a passenger on a west-bound express with a ticket to Glendive in his hat band. And the next east-bound freight brought in a very scarce article — some lumber — and a heavy iron roller marked with his name. On his return he installed the roller in the brick shack where he slept and put a big padlock on the door. What he did in that place was the town mystery. But he was flush of money, and one day he caused a sensation. He became the owner of a saloon, having bought out Pikey McGinn — taking bar, stock, goodwill and building.

Then, to the greater surprise of Brickville, he promptly sold to Pikey's hated rival everything but the building. Pikey swore it was all a put-up job, and left town in disgust. Succotash said it was because he intended to tear down the old house and put up a better one. And tear down the old place he did, and he carted the bricks away to his mystery shed — to store them there until he was ready to build, he said.

But the only thing that Pierre built at that time was a wooden water trough, leading from his well to the brick shed. Most of the day and all of the night he locked himself in that shed with his secret. Those who passed in the rear of the place declared that they could hear him grinding something, and because of a pool of red water which had accumulated near the shed they thought it must be the bricks.

Now, Fred Ritchie was one of those who regarded Pierre's conduct as most suspicious. He gave a good deal of thought to the mystery of the shed and the tearing down of McGinn's saloon, and finally he recalled having seen Succotash grab that piece of brick and make off with it. Then it occurred to him also that it was Pierre who had caused all the trouble between Pikey and Slanteye by stealing the chimney. And one day when Succotash was down in town buying provisions Fred sneaked out the back way of his

shop with a bit and stock and bored a hole in the mortar between the bricks of Pierre's shed to discover what his secret might be. As Pierre worked that night Fred had his eye glued to this hole and noted what he was doing.

Next morning his neighbors were surprised at finding that Ritchie's chimney had fallen during the night, and they were astonished to see Fred carrying the bricks into his barber shop and piling them up with great care. He wasn't going to have them stolen, as Pikey's were, he told them. And as they passed by the shop later in the day and looked in they saw him pounding away at the bricks, breaking them into bits and scanning each piece carefully.

One of his customers was let into the secret, and another chimney fell. This man passed the secret on to a bosom friend, and then there was another crash of brick. Within twenty-four hours every man, woman and child in the town was pulverizing brick as if life depended upon it.

The secret was a secret no longer. Succotash had found gold in the piece of brick that Ritchie had seen him dart forward to pick up, and he had found more in the bricks he had stolen from Pikey. With the proceeds he had set up an arastra in the shed, and in this he was grinding gold out of the bricks of Pikey's dismantled saloon.

Ritchie and the others found scales and grains and specks of gold. When the chimney bricks had been ground up the wall bricks followed, and in a short space of time Brickville was a town of tents again.

Then it was announced suddenly that Succotash and Ritchie had patched up their trouble and that Pierre had sold his arastra to Fred. This was followed by Pierre's departure from town. "He has made his pile," the Brickvillians said to one another.

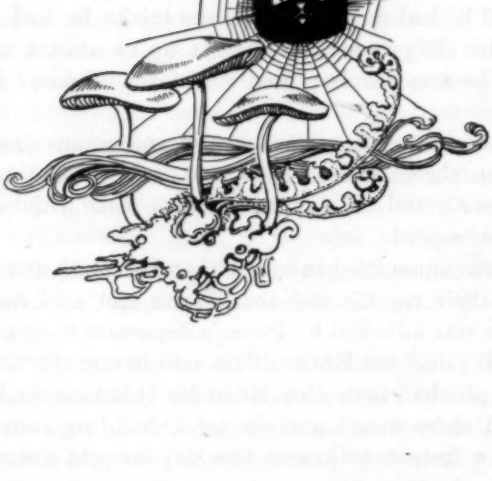
The coal pits had been abandoned for this new method of gold mining, and there wasn't a whole brick building standing in the place when a freight brakeman one day brought a startling piece of news into the town.

Succotash had bought a claybank in Basin, and a brickyard as well; and he had astonished the good people of that nook in the mountains by converting this claybank into a gold mine and this

brickyard into a mill in which to treat his rich clay, for the gold could not be freed by ordinary process of placer washing.

Then Brickville collectively kicked itself for not having thought to trace out this brickyard before the man from Canada; and the Brickvillians folded their tents and went scurrying away to the mountains to search there for other claybanks that were studded with nuggets of gold.

And so it was that the fire in Pikey McGinn's chimney happened to destroy the town.



An Unfair Exchange.*

BY ETHEL WATTS MUMFORD.

I CAN'T say I was frightened, but I felt chill, and my heart thumped when I saw the table, with its rubber sheet — the basins, in which I caught the gleam of steel — and the neat array of linen and knives. The room was long and bare, flooded with a blue-white light, and smelled faintly — a sickening, sweetish smell that permeated everything.

I had elected to come to the table, rather than to be brought unconscious. I wanted to cling to my ego as long as possible — to be a man to the last — for I realized that with an operation for appendicitis there comes always the great question of life and death. My twin brother, Fred, was waiting in the outer room. He alone of all the family knew my condition and the step I was about to take. Why worry the rest, and give them the anxiety of waiting for the news? I was in good hands. Dr. Jerrold was my classmate and devoted to me. I thought of all this dimly, as I lay myself out with the help of my old chum and his assistant. A black-eyed nurse flitted in and out, bringing things. The light blazed into my eyes, and the pain in my right groin was hot and torturing. I saw Dr. Jerrold raise a muzzle-like apparatus, and pour something into it — the smell of ether filled the room. I shivered a little. Another doctor entered and was greeted cheerfully.

"All ready?" he asked.

The muzzle descended gently over my face. I gagged and gasped. A cold wave swept over me.

"Breathe in," said the voice of the assistant, immeasurably above me.

Instantly a small, powerful voice at my ear repeated rapidly: "Breathe in — breathe in — breathe in — breathe in!"

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

There came an explosion of light above my eyes. I gasped again, while the big voice boomed, far, far distant: "Breathe in!" And the little one at my ear took it up once more: "Breathe in — breathe in — breathe in — breathe in — n — n — !"

I began to move with excessive velocity through an atmosphere of no resistance, supported by the voice. I was a flaming meteor! I flew through space without end — masses of white star-dust wheeling beside me. The air was cold and buoyant — that other ether that dwells between the worlds. On and on we were hurled furiously! The roar of comets in their course, and the whirr of planets in their orbits becoming confused with the insistent voice that bade me breathe. I knew that if I did not obey I should fall — fall for ever; so I filled my lungs to bursting, and, as I inhaled, was impelled onward with new force.

We approached a mass of light that grew steadily. The sun! I thought. We should be attracted into it, of course, and perish! The light was too cold for the burning sun; it was white — chill white. Then I heard distantly the sound of voices — and the centre of the glare became a gigantic question mark that stretched across the heavens.

I began to slow up and to swing from side to side, like a ship at sea. The voice was gone. A deadly illness grew upon me — and the question mark became the back of a white enamelled chair. Then there was a period of pain and nausea, but a cool hand soothed my brow. I was held firmly but gently, or I should have rolled about in spite of my weakness. I began to think again — I remembered that I had been operated upon.

"Is it over?" I asked, amazed; for it seemed but a moment ago that I saw the last of the bare, white room.

"Yes," said the nurse. "Don't talk!"

I saw she had blue eyes. A strange man came in, spoke to her and looked at me. "Getting on nicely," he said. Then some remarks were exchanged about temperature and pulse.

I was slowly assorting the fragments of my consciousness. I had a pain in the old place, but of a new kind. I felt bandages and dressings. My poor racked body seemed to be trying to tell me the terrible ordeal it had been through — "when *you* were away" — it spoke through every miserable nerve and relaxed

muscle, as if saying: "Yes, *we* were always conscious — we knew. It was terrible — where did you go?" and my ego, in turn, tried to explain. I looked at my hand on the counterpane. It was changed; so small and thin. I glanced at the room. Evidently they had decided it would be best not to put me in the one I had chosen. This was probably the retreat of the doctor's wife — it was filled with womanly trifles, though all superfluous furniture had been removed. The nurse sat by me, bathing my head from time to time, and, as the sickening taste in my mouth increased, she gave me a bit of ice to cool my tongue — only a bit, but such a relief.

A twinge of agony bit at my side. "Hell!" I ejaculated. The nurse looked startled. She held my hand a moment, then took my temperature with a tiny glass thermometer she put under my tongue — nodded her head, and moved away.

The strange man came in again a little later, walked up to me and held my hand.

"How goes it, little one?" he said.

I looked surprised. "The nausea is better," I said; "but —"

"You must be very quiet, my dear; appendicitis is no joke, and though your case was a simple one — the inflammation had not extended — still you must be obedient and very still — it's hard, of course, and you'll suffer a great deal, but you are courageous."

I only half-listened. "Where," I asked, "is Dr. Jerrold?"

It was his turn to be surprised. "He is — with a case — why?"

"Oh!" I answered. "I thought he wouldn't have gone — he was so anxious about me."

"Was he?" said the man. "Well, be quiet now — like a good girl."

"Good — *what?*" I gasped suddenly.

He leaned over me and looked me in the face; he felt my pulse. "The ether is still on," he said, and slipped out of the room.

I put my hand to my head — vaguely — and felt a heavy braid of hair. I believe I screamed. The nurse ran to me. I waved at her frantically. "Bring me a mirror!" I commanded.

"Lie still," she said gently.

"Bring me a mirror!" I said, "or I'll get up and get it!"

She pinned me to the bed with one strong hand and rang a bell.

"Violent?" asked the man, returning.

She nodded.

He came toward me and between them they held me fast and spoke soothingly. Then, to my amazement and rage, I burst into tears.

"A mirror!" I sobbed. "Bring me a mirror!" I was almost insane.

The man gave a nod of consent, the nurse left me and brought a hand-glass from the bureau.

I looked! The face I saw was that of a young girl — her black eyes flaming with excitement — her face drawn by suffering, and white, but for two scarlet spots on the cheeks. About my head — for it was mine — was a great coil of brown hair! I fainted.

When I regained consciousness, the man and the nurse were bending over me. Then followed a confused period. I was half mad, and every time I grew conscious the same horrible question — who and what was I — faced me, and threw me off my balance again. My temperature would not go down — my pulse beat wildly. The doctor finally administered opiates.

The days that followed were terrible beyond description. I could not grasp the awful thing that had happened. I doubted my sanity. But as conviction grew that I was not a victim of a delusion, but of some amazing change, I fought that theory with all the will in me. I felt trapped and cruelly abused. I could confide nothing of my trouble or I risked the insane asylum. So I fought the fearful battle out alone, and the horror of it came near unsettling my reason. Often I had recourse to touching something to make sure I was not mistaken — the coverlid, the medicine bottles, the spoons; each served as a focus for my poor wits. But the accuracy of my vision and touch, with the logical sequence of my life, convinced me finally that, whatever had happened to my soul — this body, at least, was in normal surroundings.

At last, after days of misery, I became sufficiently master of myself to begin to make an effort to discover my new personality. But the instant I asked questions my doctor and nurse became alarmed. So I took the part of silence, and they thought me better.

A week or more after my operation, a strange, handsome, middle-aged lady was admitted.

"Who is that?" I asked the nurse, unwarily.

She heard me, and, though evidently prepared for my affliction, it struck home.

"Don't you know me?" she begged. "Oh, Polly! Polly, dear — don't you know your mother!"

The nurse put up a warning hand, but the poor woman's distress had touched me. Since this strange and terrible thing had happened, I might as well make the best of it.

"Of course, mother," I said; "how stupid of me."

She almost cried for joy this time. The doctor came in.

"Don't excite my patient," he said, looking over her head the while at the nurse, who smiled. His face cleared.

"How — how are they all?" I asked at a venture; for the doctor and nurse were watching me like hawks.

"Marjie is well," said the lady. "Tom is staying with us. Your father is very tired, dear, for we've all been so anxious about you. But now that you're getting well again, he is better too. We shall all be so glad to have our dear, laughing Polly back again. Your father is looking about for a horse for you, so when you're up you can have one all to yourself."

"Thank you," I said vaguely. "Remember me — give my love to — all of them." I judged Tom and Marjie to be my brother and sister, so I thought it safe to say: "Tell Tom he's a poor sort of a brother if he doesn't write me all the news. I can have a letter, can't I, Doc?"

There was a miserable silence.

My new mother said gently: "Tom is not your brother, Polly. Don't you remember?"

She picked up my left hand and held it up before me. On the third finger was a heavy, old-fashioned ring, set with a solitaire. "Good Lord!" I thought. "I'm engaged, am I — engaged to a man named Tom!" They must have seen the terror on my face. My mother's lip quivered.

"You had better go," the doctor said. "She mustn't be tired."

They left me, all but the nurse. I lay thinking. Then I determined to take the bull by the horns.

"Nurse," I said, "what is the rest of my name; Polly — what? I can't remember."

"Polly Delano," she answered.

"And how many brothers and sisters have I?"

"One sister, Marjorie."

"And I'm engaged to Tom who? — do you happen to know?"

"Yes, Tom Tregenna."

"Tom Tregenna," I exclaimed excitedly. "You don't mean it? Why, I know him well!"

I saw my mistake. "I mean I remember all about him — and I had forgotten so many things."

During the days that followed I was introduced to the members of my new family, one by one, and gradually learned to navigate fairly safely through the narrows and shallows of conversation. I was so taken up mentally that my physical condition bothered me little — though I suffered from lying still so long, and the usual dressing was far from pleasant. In three weeks I was allowed to move from my bed. I was wofully weak. I, who had been the centre rush of my college team, and had kept my condition perfect since I graduated, could not move unaided, and, in the frail body I had come to occupy in some strange way, could not even lift a book. I began to see a few friends, though always carefully prepared for any condition of mind. I caught them watching me curiously. The most trying ordeal was when Tom came. He was tremulous with eagerness, yet I could see he feared the meeting — and God knows I feared it, too — but I was so glad to stand on firm ground once more that I greeted him rapturously. Then I forgot, and began in my own character:

"Tom, I'm that glad to see you — my lord, man! — but this has been a siege! Nobody can ever know what I've been through — never! — and, say, old chap, I'm rusty; what's all the news? How's Will Featherly? and what became of little Ponsonby and that Taunton girl? The club was talking of nothing else when I was taken sick."

Tom looked amazed, but answered my questions. "When did you meet Ponsonby? I did not know you knew him."

"Know him!" said I. "Why, Ponsonby and I spent a month together in Quimberley's camp in Maine."

"You did? When?"

"Two years ago — we had splendid sport."

"Who chaperoned?"

"Nobody; there weren't any ladies — "

"No ladies!"

"No. There was some talk of Mrs. Q. coming up; but we rather preferred keeping bachelors' hall."

Then Tom began humoring me. "Of course, Polly, dear" —

"Say," I went on, "I want awfully to see Dr. Jerrold; can't you manage it? Ask what's-his-name, the Medico, to get him to come."

"Of course," said Tom, with a jealous look in his eyes.

I laughed aloud. "You're not going to be jealous of him, I hope," I roared in unladylike mirth.

"Well, why are you asking for him? Dr. Benson says you asked for him almost as soon as you came out from the ether."

"Because," I answered, "I have an idea that Jerrold will be able to help me more than any one else. Get Benson to talk me over with him."

Tom promised, and kissed me good-bye. I shall never forget it — it gave me the horrors for a week!

The next day when Benson came I pretended to sleep, for I did not want to be bothered with him; and I had discovered in my new brain a depth of innocent deceit that amazed me. The doctor and the nurse discussed me in low voices.

"The strange thing is," said Benson, "that Dr. Jerrold has an appendicitis case followed by loss of identity with a hallucination of change of sex — a combination utterly unknown before. And he tells me he operated on the same day, almost at the same hour, that we did. It's most extraordinary — and Miss Delano's insisting that Jerrold is the only man who could understand her case. It's very odd. He's coming here to-day to consult; she insists on it."

"How's his case coming on?" asked the nurse interestedly.

"Not well. They've had all sorts of trouble. The case to begin with was worse than ours, and when the complication arose they had all sorts of trouble. Patient was hysterical — took everything hard — begged for an imaginary family of sisters and

brothers and fiancés and things — refused to have anything to do with his own family — wouldn't listen to reason, and now he's fretting himself so, the recovery is very doubtful."

By this time I was so interested that I forgot my sham sleep and was staring, open-eyed, at the speaker.

"Did — did — Jerrold operate that case at his private sanitarium?" I demanded.

"Yes," said the doctor, surprised.

"Was it — he — was his name Lloyd Callandar?"

"I believe it was."

"O Lord! — O Lord!" I groaned, "What in thunder can I do? — and he may not recover, you say — Good heavens, man — don't say that!" — and I sat up, for I was stronger now.

"Come, come," said Benson cheerily. "Don't feel that way. Because one case of appendicitis turns out badly it doesn't mean yours will too. You're almost well now — don't work yourself up, my dear."

"But he mustn't die!" — and here again I cried bitterly, and felt better for it. I thought in despair of what to do. I had evidently located my lost body — but the occupant was killing it — this girl soul, who had usurped my place — or, I hers. How was it? Anyway she had no right to murder me. I had done the best I could for her body; I hadn't lost her reason for her — confound her — and there she was fretting my poor sick hulk to death. I hated her!

An immeasurable pity and affection for my lost carcass invaded me, and I cried some more. Then I reasoned that I must reach her some way — must give her a star to steer her benighted and tempest-tossed course by. She must know that I had her body in charge, and would be only too glad to give it back to her — but how! There I was stumped; but then, that could be attended to later. The thing was to stop her before she killed me. Heavens! then her released ego would come and oust me, or insist on inhabiting this single shell together — and then what could we do!

I saw madness staring me in the face! but I gripped myself and waited for Dr. Jerrold. He came. He was mightily interested. I begged to see him alone. He sat beside me as I talked.

"I hear," I said, "that you have a similar case to mine that you are treating. A loss of identity, accompanied by hallucination of change of sex."

"You put it well, Miss Delano."

"May I ask you what you have been able to do for your patient?"

"Not much," he answered. "I'm sorry to say we have a very stubborn case."

"You know this Mr. Callandar well — he is a friend of yours, is he not?"

"Yes; that makes it more distressing."

"Would you recognize any of his peculiarities if you met them elsewhere? For instance, he has a knack for drawing — give me a pencil, please."

He handed me one.

I tried to sketch with my former facility, but the hand I now owned would not obey. I shook my head.

"I know his style well," said Jerrold; "but what has that to do with the question?"

I was baffled. "You will be surprised," I said, "when I tell you that Callandar and I are old friends, unknown to any one. For instance, you remember the incidents of the night you spent together at Tunicliff, with young Trainor, and the confession he made when he died?" (Jerrold was startled this time.) "You think that is known to none save you and Callandar; but you see I know too."

"But you are engaged to some one else?" I saw a suspicion dawn in his eyes, but I did not stop to care.

"You see," I continued, "I know him well. Now, will you take a note from me to him — and not read it? It is for him alone — it may help."

Jerrold bowed in silence.

I took up the pencil and a sheet of note paper and began:

MISS DELANO: — Don't trouble; I am in charge of your body. Believe me, it will all come right. Don't fret; try to accommodate yourself to your new home until we can meet and talk it over. You must first get well. Remember I hold you accountable for my body — I have done my best for yours — and you owe it to me to save mine.

From the soul in your body to the soul in mine.

LLOYD CALLANDAR.

I folded this extraordinary letter and directed it to myself. "There may be an answer," I added; "will you bring it to me to-morrow? And say nothing to any one, please."

He went away, and in a fever of anxiety I awaited the reply I knew would come.

Jerrold called the next day about noon.

"Your note seemed to quiet my patient wonderfully," he told me. "Here is your answer."

I tore it open; it ran:

Thank God! I thought I was mad! Then it's true—all true. I *will* get well, Mr. Callandar, *indeed* I will. I won't fret any more. I shall do all in my power to make your body sound and whole for you—and then we must find some way to exchange our egos. I could laugh, I am so happy to know I'm not insane. Write me again, and tell me how all my people are.

From the soul in your body to the soul in mine.

I wrote in answer a description of all the family and what they did and said. I dwelt upon Tom's jealousy of the doctor, and Jerrold's mystification. I told her of her new horse, of her mother's delight in my — her — rapid recovery. I told all my difficulties in assuming her position and name.

In exchange, she told me how my mother was tending her; and how Fred brought her, every day, the most extraordinary bits of gossip from my various clubs. How she was coming to have a very different idea of men in general and certain of her acquaintances in particular. I shuddered at the thought of my innocent brother and his yarns. However, she was beginning to see the humor of the situation, particularly of my troubles with Tom — that seemed to delight her immensely. She mended daily. Jerrold was almost ill himself of curiosity as to what our letters contained. That he had a notion of some intrigue — a secret marriage, perhaps — was evident. He even threw out hints that I was not treating Tom fairly.

As for Tom himself, I must own that with returning strength, a spirit of mischief possessed me to make his life a burden to him — he certainly made mine a trial. I badgered him mercilessly. I showed him by my inferences that I knew of many little trifles in his past of which his Polly might well be in ignorance. He spent a very miserable month, I fear. He often said to me sadly: "Polly, you are greatly changed," and every time I laughed.

The letters from the real Polly were a delight to me, and I grew to watch for them with more than anxiety. But, most of all, I wanted to see her. At this time I would sit for hours before the looking glass admiring the curve of my — her — lips, I mean, and the beauty of her hair. I took great care of that hair for her sake; I knew she would wish to find it well groomed and fine. Her eyes were lovely. I caught myself gazing at my reflection with lover-like intenseness till I blushed violently — which was very pretty to watch. I was charming in a white cashmere wrapper, and my hands were beautiful, though too thin and transparent now.

I got on splendidly with the family; there were occasional relapses, of course; but on the whole I did very well indeed, Polly coaching me by letter.

The day came at last when I was taken for my first drive since my illness. Polly had informed me the day before that she expected to be taken home — *my* home — on that day, and I managed to be driven in that direction, in hopes of seeing myself and Polly.

We met! I was in her new landau, well wrapped up in her furs. She was with Fred in a hansom. I started when I saw my old self. I was so white and thin. But lo! and behold! up came my long arm and my paw of a hand, and threw a dainty kiss at me. It was Polly, rejoicing to see her old self again. I had to laugh. I threw back my head and ha-ha'd! I made a dive at my hat to wave it — and found it fastened to my back hair with a lot of long pins. Polly almost fell over the apron of the hansom, she laughed so heartily, and Fred drew her back and looked hopelessly puzzled and anxious.

As for Tom, who was driving with me, he was hot. "I did not know that you knew Callandar, Polly; but even if you do, it's mighty bad form for both of you, let me say, to carry on like that. I wish you would remember that you are not only engaged, but engaged to be married to me!"

I awoke suddenly to realization and turned on him raging. He going to marry me! — Polly, I mean! — not if I could help it! He wasn't worthy of her, that I knew; and, well — I would not have it. Polly and I were bound by too close a tie to allow that cad of

a Tom Tregenna to come between us. I pulled off my glove in trembling haste. I dragged at the old-fashioned solitaire.

"Take it back," I said hoarsely. "The engagement is broken!"

"I won't believe it, Polly," he said, with a look in his eyes that made me feel like a brute. He took the ring and gazed at it, heart-brokenly. "It was my mother's!" he choked.

It broke me all up, but I stood my ground.

"Polly! Polly!" he urged. "You're not well — wait, think it over. You're not your true self now."

I shook my head. "I know," I answered. "But everything is changed since I was ill, everything — please don't make it hard for me."

We drove on in silence. He helped me up the steps when we reached home, and left me in charge of "Mother!"

"Was it a pleasant drive, dear?" she asked.

I nodded. "I've broken my engagement," I said bluntly, "and don't want any one to speak to me about it" — and fled.

When I reached my room — full of feminine fripperies — I gasped with relief. Polly shouldn't marry Tom anyway — but — but — what a base advantage I had taken of my tenure of her will! I hated myself while I rejoiced. I spent a restless night.

The next day came a note, this time by post, from Polly, saying:

I'm now installed in your rooms. They smell horribly of tobacco smoke and I have had to get a barber to shave you, as I didn't know how. You had a full beard, as you — I mean I — may have noticed when we met. All this by way of saying that I'll be allowed to go about soon, and if you will name a day next week, I might call and see you — think of that! We have a very great deal to say to each other now. You don't know how fond of you I've grown. I look at myself all day. You must have a fine figure when you're well. I haven't learned to allow for your big shoulders or long legs yet. Indeed, I don't know that I want to swap back to my old self. I'm having a beautiful time with your friends; there are packs of them up to see me all the time. You're awfully popular, you know. They are teaching me poker; it's one of the things I forgot during my illness. Well, so-long, old man — (You see how adaptable I am) — I'll look you up as soon as the mater lets me out.

Your affectionate TENANT.

This letter worried me — not a little. Suppose, as was more than possible, she should insist on — on retaining my body. How could I evict her? And I was not at all pleased in my new shape, now that health and strength were returning. I found a whole volume of rules and regulations — things I must and mustn't do. I was nagged continually on a thousand small matters: My

language, my manners — everything. I couldn't move unattended. I couldn't move freely. In short, I foresaw that when I finally resumed my health, life would hardly be worth living. My books were all selected for me, and I missed sorely some steady occupation. Charities and embroidery did not interest me, though my fingers seemed willing to tackle the latter.

Now, suppose through the refusal of Miss Delano to come to her own again, I should be condemned! Oh, heavens, no! I wrote and appointed the earliest possible date. I informed all the family that I insisted on seeing Mr. Callandar alone, or I'd make a scene. Tears I found at my disposal and an excellent argument.

At last — Oh, what a weary week it was! — the day, the hour came. I had dressed myself very carefully in Polly's prettiest tea-gown. I listened eagerly for the door-bell for hours — at last it tinkled. I saw my familiar bulk in the doorway. I ran down the stairs — ran against the startled maid coming up with my card — and bounded into the parlor, regardless of the fact that the doctors had forbidden violent exercise.

Polly was standing by the fireplace, shyly, looking very big. She sat down, caught my feet in the rug, and bumped my shoulders on the sofa back, after first hitting my head on the chandelier. "Oh! Oh!" said Polly ruefully. "That's always the way! How well I do look, Mr. Callandar!"

Then she looked at me. It was my face, but it was Polly, my Polly I had grown to love by letter, that looked at me from my eyes. My heart swelled to bursting beneath the pink tea-gown, and I came across and kissed myself right on the moustache that she hadn't shaved off after all.

A moment of utter bliss! — and then! — I found myself sitting in the chair, and Polly — Polly's soul in Polly's body this time — standing beside me — with her face very close to mine. We had exchanged again!

"Oh! Oh!" cried she. "What have I — what have you — what have we done?"

"It's all right. O Polly, Polly, dear! we're all so — mixed up — do let's get married, and — I love you — sweetheart!"

I stood up and kissed her again. This time we did not swap souls, though it felt very much as if we might.

Then suddenly, "Oh, gracious!" she exclaimed. "I'm engaged — to Tom Tregenna — what shall I do?"

"Oh, no, you're not. I broke it off for you!"

"What made you take such liberties," she inquired hotly. "I'd like to know how you knew I'd allow it — that's just like you men!"

"What do you know about it?" I spoke rashly on the old lines of defence — and then we looked at each other and laughed.

So we were very happy, but Dr. Jerrold continues to think Polly the worst coquette on record, and so, I fear, does Tom Tregenna.

The Man Who Could Walk Straight.*

BY FRANK BURNHAM BAGLEY.

THOUGH he had been called an excitement-seeker, Grafton Rouse was not then looking for excitement, but merely for the easiest route a guide could show him from the western side of the Andes to the eastern pampas. The happenings of every day — yes, every hour — such as creeping along the verge of a precipice on a trail scarce wider than his two hands, or leading his burro over hairlike swinging bridges, with the earth a few thousand feet below — he had come to regard as minor incidents.

They had reached the point of greatest altitude on their journey, and were just entering, through a cleft in the solid rock, an absolutely level plateau, covered with short grass, when five men, as though actuated by a common spring, suddenly emerged in front.

While two of the bandits kept them covered with their carbines, the others bound them hand and foot and led them some distance toward the middle of the plateau, where they were dumped from their donkeys and robbed of everything of value.

After that they were fed, which somewhat allayed the apprehensions of Rouse, who had been studying his captors and doubted if five more repulsive or even equally villanous looking rascals could be assembled.

When at the close of their repast they had taken a few puffs from Rouse's best cigars, they appeared to expand with a feeling as near akin to good humor as anything of which they were capable, and seizing this opportunity, Rouse quietly asked for one of his own Perfectos. The man who, gaping with astonishment, handed it to him, said:

"Enjoy it, Señor, for you'll have to walk straight this afternoon."

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

This witticism, obscure to Rouse, was evidently a great joke to the brigands.

"*Can* you walk straight?" continued the joker, and the laughter ceased.

Rouse thought that perhaps the safe course would be to amuse his custodians, if possible, and replied:

"Morally, I can; but physically not at all — for I limp."

This seemed to be considered even more humorous than the bandit's badinage, and sent the ruffians into a roar of merriment.

Rouse thought that ominous. No thorough scoundrel laughs in that way without meaning harm to some one. But, as lightly as possible, he enquired:

"Which kind of straight walking did you mean?"

"Well, physically, Señor; and it's pretty important for you —"

"Shut up, Pedro. What is he to us more than the others?"

But Pedro, who perhaps had meant to say no more, was not to be brow-beaten, and sullenly disregarding the protest of José, continued his chaff, saying that their chief was a scientist, who had discovered that every man has one leg shorter than the other, and is thereby prevented from walking straight, and that they were searching for a man who could.

"Purely in the interest of science?" suggested Rouse, coolly.

The laughter was prolonged at this sally. When it subsided, Pedro answered:

"More in the interest of the man who walks. If he walks straight —"

"Enough — enough!" growled a hitherto silent scoundrel. "To business!"

"The Portuguese always talks sense," rumbled the deep voice of still another.

"Shall we take the limper first?"

"*Carambo!* You have no artistic feeling, José. Leave the best for the last!"

This proposal seemed to meet tacit approval, and Rouse thereupon said:

"If my guide is to make the first experiment, I hope I'm not debarred from being a spectator. Is there any objection to my seeing the sport?"

This was greeted with uproarious glee, and Rouse's heart sank at the grim reply, as a gag was thrust into his mouth:

"You shall have a front seat, Señor, but no coaching of the performers is permitted — and there are never any encores."

They then unbound the guide's feet, leaving his hands tied behind him and bandaged his eyes. One man lay down and gazed steadily across the plain. Rouse tried to follow his glance, but could discern nothing but the unbroken plateau, extending for some miles to the next range of mountains. Stretching out an arm and sighting along it as one might a rifle, the prostrate man held it steadily pointed at the object of his scrutiny. The two men holding the guide faced him exactly in the direction indicated and released him, telling him to walk straight ahead.

Whatever the game might be, it was soon evident that the guide would not prove a success, for he was gradually veering to the left. As this became more apparent, the laughter of the ladrones rose higher and Rouse's uneasiness increased. A vague but powerful dread impressed him with a sense of swiftly impending calamity. The next moment he almost laughed himself at his indefinite fears. What harm could possibly befall a man on that level plain? If their captors meant to kill them, why had they not already done so? They had made no movement toward their weapons, which lay stacked with their saddles. If they let the guide go far enough he might make a break for the mountains, and —

A movement as of expectancy among the men at his side brought Rouse from his revery with a shudder and drew his wandering attention back to the guide, who was still drifting perceptibly to the left. The next instant he had disappeared!

There, on the level plain, he had gone from sight in a flash. Rouse involuntarily winked his eyes, and opened them again. He certainly was not dreaming. And then, borne on the gentle breeze blowing in his face, came an agonizing scream — such a scream as a man can give but once in his life — such as no man can listen to unmoved. The end of that awful shriek was smothered in a burst of ribald laughter, more terrible even than the death-cry that evoked it.

That was the fateful moment for Grafton Rouse. It was then that his hard common-sense and iron nerve struggled for mastery over

the formless fear tearing at his soul — and won. The single second in which he *knew* that he was again master of his old self was the happiest of his life — even if it were to be the last.

Another moment was left him for swift and vigorous thought, while the murderers were still enjoying their ghastly entertainment. It was evidently vital that he should walk straight. But could he — and how? His active memory leaped back to childhood days, when the human cubs with whom he sported mocked his slight infirmity, and with frank, boyish brutality nicknamed him "Gimpy." How he had set his teeth together, and, time and again, practised walking a crack in the pavement with his eyes shut, till he could beat any symmetrical boy of his acquaintance. If he could but recall the trick — for it was a trick!

There was a stir among the robbers, who began to rise.

Rouse thought intently. He remembered that, while almost everybody else veered to the left in walking, his tendency was in the opposite direction. This would help him baffle the assassins, if —

Ah! Now the details came back to him. He had corrected the trend to the right by giving the left foot a half shift outward at each third step! He would try it, and could only hope that increase of height and weight and age would not affect the result.

Now his time had come. With many bad jokes at his expense they removed the gag and the rope about his legs, but plunged him in darkness by binding his eyes. As they led him toward the starting point, he purposely staggered and stumbled, and declared that the tightly-tied rope had benumbed him. Would not the Señores — how the title stuck in his throat — allow him to untwist the tangles in his limping limb by trotting about a bit?

The grotesquely worded request was granted with another shout of merriment. Truly, he could touch the chord of humor in these miscreants.

As he limped about over the short grass, he listened intently, and when the laughter was loudest he cautiously tried the shift of the left foot. He could not remember how it was done. Again he tried. The rascals laughed. He could hardly refrain from joining in that shout — he felt instinctively that he had got the swing of it.

"Señores, I am ready."

Grasped again by rough hands, he was held one long, dreadful moment, during which he saw in his mind's eye that figure of a man on the ground, silently pointing out the sole road to safety! Then he was given a slight turn into a position from which he was careful not to swerve the fraction of an inch. Then came the dread command:

"Walk straight ahead!"

It is difficult — perhaps impossible — to convey to one who has not undergone such an ordeal any conception of the dread, the horror, the shrinking, sickening fear that crushed down in the darkness upon the stout soul of Grafton Rouse. With every other sense but sight sharpened by his peril, he could hear upon the short turf the stealthy footfalls of the assassins, drumming a death march. An inward echo of the poor guide's last awful cry sounded in his ears. With each forward step the probability that it would be his last grew stronger. God! How *could* he die, in health and vigor, with the warm sunshine upon his head, the cool breeze upon his brow, the majestic mountains waiting for him! He almost stopped to turn upon his tormentors — and then the knowledge of utter helplessness forced tears from his blindfolded eyes — and no one lived who had ever accused Rouse of weakness.

Amid this tumult of emotions, some old acquired habit of cerebration kept accurate count of his footsteps, and every third time the left foot touched the ground it was shifted automatically outward, the fraction of a circle.

There was no laughter behind him now, and the silence was encouragement indeed; he must be walking straight. On and on he went, such an interminable distance that he began to imagine himself alone, and had an impulse to make a dash for the mountains, but controlled himself.

A few steps farther on, his foot came suddenly in contact with something that gave him the keenest thrill he had yet experienced, and he held back involuntarily. Was it death — or life and liberty? His other foot, before he could check the motion, joined the first upon a board, which emitted a hollow sound.

"Halt!" came a ringing order, the most welcome he had ever obeyed. "Congratulations, Señor, you walk straight indeed, for a lame man."

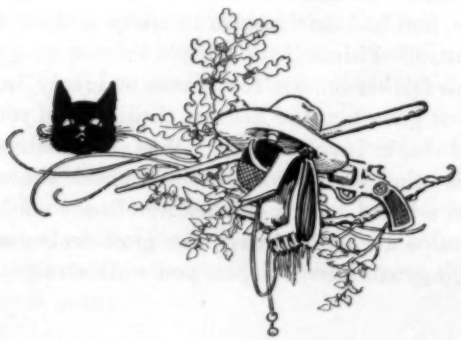
A murmur of approval from the other voices convinced Rouse in an indefinite way, but with an infinite relief, that he was somehow saved.

The cords around his wrists were cut, but at the same time his legs were tied again. After waiting a long time for further orders, with the bandage still over his eyes, he raised his hands to remove it, half expecting to be shot for his temerity.

The sight that met his blinking eyes was, even after the intangible terrors of the darkness, a shock that sent a wave of horror sweeping through him, and brought him tottering to his knees, clinging for life to a narrow plank!

He found himself upon the end of a swinging bridge spanning a volcanic rift cleft clean through the middle of the plateau, as sharply as though cut with a mighty saw. In its depth it was abysmal, and in that awful trench of a titanic battlefield lay the remains of all those wretches who had been bidden to "walk straight" — to God!

When Rouse could take his eyes from the black chasm he had escaped, he saw his burro hitched to the single post supporting one end of the guard rope of the bridge. The robbers were half way back to their own mounts. When he had untied his legs and led his donkey across the gulf, he naturally reached for the Winchester swung on the pommel, and was not surprised to find it empty and the cartridge belt gone, but when he unrolled his blanket that night on the eastern slope of the Andes, and both belt and money fell out, he almost wished he had returned the courteous hat-wave of the bandits as they rode away.



In Hell's Cañon.*

BY HAROLD KINSABBY.

ADVENTUROUS prospectors who have followed the perilous trails over the Cabinet Mountains have, as a matter of course, heard of the Lost Lead, but only he who is a total stranger to fear has penetrated the chaotic wilderness of Hell's Cañon, and thus come suddenly upon the Grave of Gold. Four rude granite posts, connected by heavy log chains, enclose the spot. On the face of the giant bowlder that stands guard over the few square feet of sacred earth is carved:

THE LOST LEAD.
LOUIS GILBERT.
1860–1891.

This inscription marks the loneliest, yet richest, grave in the world.

Late in the spring of 1889, Louis Gilbert left his home in Kentucky for a visit to his uncle's mine in the Northwest. He had lung trouble, and the doctor had ordered an outdoor life. While his health improved, he became infected with another ailment, perhaps the only one to be caught at that great altitude — the gold fever. Miners were his only associates, the talk was all of lodes, leads and drifts, and the only communication with the outside world was by the train of pack mules that carried the heavy ore sacks down the winding trail. So it was not surprising that his walks took the character of prospecting tours, and carried him farther and farther from camp. Late in October, when his visit was nearly over, he started with three days' food for a last trip, into new territory. From a conical mountain top about ten miles

* Copyright, 1900, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

west of the mine, he had looked over a lower range of summits to a great expanse of wild and broken country that he had never explored.

The weather was like summer when he started, but thirty-six hours later, on the evening of the second day, a fierce snowstorm set in. By midnight, the first blizzard of the season was raging through the mountains. On the third day the storm still howled furiously, but searching parties were sent out with a faint hope of finding the young prospector before the trails became entirely impassable. In the dim twilight of the afternoon they returned one by one, almost worn out, convinced that the body of the missing man would not be found till the warm winds of spring should melt away the drifts. Yet, as a humane precaution, lights were set in cabin windows, and, guided by one of them, Louis Gilbert staggered into camp and fell like a dead man before the mess-room door. He was taken from the snow, wrapped in blankets and laid before a blazing fire. When he showed signs of life he was given hot drinks and undressed. His prospector's belt dropped to the floor like lead, and when opened was found to be stuffed with nuggets of virgin gold.

In the fever that followed, Gilbert talked deliriously of his long struggle through the blinding drifts, hungry, cold and aching for the sleep which would mean death, yet forcing himself onward with the blizzard at his back as his only guide. The amazing richness of his find had given him the strength that saved his life.

Finally he opened his eyes with the old look and told more in detail the story of his wonderful discovery. On the east side of a stream, in a cañon so terribly wild and broken that it was almost impassable, he had found the gold on the very surface of a ledge.

Filling his belt, he had started to blaze his way back, when the storm came down with frightful violence. The rest of the journey was simply a horrible nightmare.

As nothing could be done while the snow lasted, Gilbert returned to Kentucky for the winter, yet could think of nothing but his gold mine. He had found a fortune, had even put his hands upon it, and knew it was his whenever he could stake off his claim and take possession. He spent his time in making a chart

of the stream he had followed on which he set down every detail he could recall of the eastern bank, along which he had travelled.

Early in the spring he was back at his uncle's mine, waiting impatiently for the snow to melt and be carried away by the swollen streams. Finally, after a tedious delay, he set out with a small party of miners all eager to have a hand in locating the rich prospect.

"Hell's Cañon!" exclaimed the foreman, as, skirting Cone Top mountain, Gilbert pointed out the way. One of the men, a Mexican, declined to go any farther with the party, and the foreman explained to the wondering Gilbert:

"The Mexicans give Hell's Cañon a wide berth. They say that one of them found a big treasure there, and then lost it and his life in some uncanny way. They found his bones though, next summer. Knew 'em by his divining rod, that he clung to even in death."

On the second day Gilbert and his companions found the stream, which fought its way among the upturned rocks, cavernous gorges and fallen logs of Hell's Cañon. At the sight of the stream Gilbert eagerly led the search along the east bank, and every yard was carefully searched. But the bowlder, the two dead trees — every other characteristic landmark on Gilbert's chart — had disappeared. All search was vain. The map was not that of the locality they were in — as Gilbert himself was obliged to admit.

During that summer Gilbert led out four other searching parties, but never got any nearer the lost lead. Then he again went South for the winter. When he next returned it was with a flushed cheek that contrasted horribly with his pale, pinched look and steadily failing strength. In spite of all disappointments, he was still hopeful, and to humor him his uncle's miners occasionally made excursions into the maze of peaks and gulches.

One morning, late in the season, Gilbert asked for one more chance to solve the mystery of Hell's Cañon. He had had a dream, he said enthusiastically, that this time he would be successful. The miners did not put much faith in dreams, but, for his uncle's sake, and because it was recalled that this was the second anniversary of the great discovery, they made up a party and started out in the usual direction. Although they went